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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VILNIUS 001512

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UK](#) [BO](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL HASTINGS PRAISES LITHUANIAN EFFORTS IN
UKRAINE, PROMISES OSCE CONFERENCE ON BALTIC REGION

REF: A. VILNIUS 1489

[1](#)B. VILNIUS 1480

Classified By: Vice Consul Timothy E. Liston for reasons 1.4(B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Congressman Alcee Hastings, attending a GOL-sponsored conference on the promotion of democracy in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the South Caucasus, met with President Adamkus and parliamentary (Seimas) and GOL foreign policy experts on December 3 to discuss the current Ukrainian political crisis and propose an OSCE conference on issues affecting the Baltic region, i.e. trafficking in persons, Belarus and counter-terrorism. Hastings, speaking as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, praised President Adamkus for his mediation efforts of the Ukraine political crisis. President Adamkus planned to continue these efforts, but said he was "not encouraged" by President Kuchma's trip to Moscow last week. President Adamkus and Seimas officials promised to assist Congressman Hastings in formulating an agenda for his proposed OSCE conference on the Baltic region. President Adamkus and other Lithuanian interlocutors reacted positively to Hastings' calls for a more proactive policy towards Belarus. President Adamkus warned of repeating past mistakes of EU policy toward Ukraine when formulating a new policy toward Belarus. End Summary.

Ukraine: President Adamkus doing what he can

[1](#)2. (SBU) Congressman Hastings, representing the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as its President, attended a GOL-sponsored conference on promotion of democracy in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the South Caucasus. On the margins of the conference, Congressmen Hastings met with several GOL leaders, including President Adamkus. The President stressed his determination to continue mediating a peaceful solution to the current political crisis in the Ukraine. He, however, expressed his dismay with President Kuchma's decision last week to meet with Russian President Putin on the situation in Ukraine. President Adamkus was "not encouraged" by President Putin's level of involvement - nor by the statements following the Putin-Kuchma meeting - in what Adamkus considered Ukrainian internal affairs. Nevertheless, Adamkus underlined his determination to see the mediation process through to its end (which, together with Polish President Kwasniewski and EU High Representative Solana, he has done successfully -- reftel).

Hastings Proposes Baltic Regional Conference

[1](#)3. (U) Congressman Hastings put forth in all of his meetings the idea of holding an OSCE-sponsored conference addressing the issues and challenges that face the Baltic region, mentioning Trafficking in Persons, counter-terrorism, and Belarus as the headlining issues. Congressman Hastings looked forward to working with GOL officials and Seimas leaders in putting together a useful conference with a timely agenda. President Adamkus, Chairman of the Seimas Arturas Paulauskas, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee Justinas Karosas, and National Security Committee Chairman Alvydas Sadeckas welcomed the idea of such a conference, and promised to lend assistance in bringing it to fruition.

[1](#)4. (C) A central issue during each of Congressman Hastings' meetings was Belarus, which he planned to make a central topic at his envisioned OSCE conference on the Baltic region. Hastings underlined the need for a more proactive policy toward Belarus, and looked to Lithuania to offer insights on the way ahead. He noted that a policy of isolation would not foment regime change in Belarus, and thought it important to invite representatives of the Belarusian government, opening some channel for frank discussions on the current political situation in Belarus.

[1](#)5. (C) All parties - particularly President Adamkus and Seimas Foreign Affairs Chairman Karosas - thought a more proactive policy toward Belarus could help stimulate pro-democratic forces there. President Adamkus, prefacing his remarks by stating his disapproval of Belarusian President Lukashenko, said a more proactive policy would allow for the Belarusian people's voice to be heard - "pumping oxygen" into the democratic movement. President

Adamkus was quick to draw parallels between Belarus and Ukraine, noting that the EU's "reluctance" to give Belarus any signals about becoming part of the "EU family" is similar to its approach towards Ukraine over the past decade. In Adamkus' mind, the EU's lack of engagement in Ukraine has had lasting effects, including the current political crisis gripping Kiev. He stated that the EU must own up to this fact, and not repeat the same mistakes with Belarus.

Comment

16. (C) Rep. Hastings visit afforded Lithuanian government officials another opportunity to state their commitment to playing an active role in the resolution of Ukraine's political imbroglio and voice their support for a more active approach to Belarus. President Adamkus echoed most of his Ukraine comments - sans Belarus parallels - made to Congressman Hastings at a dinner he hosted that night for an international group of government officials and NGO representatives. However, President Adamkus' comparative remarks on Belarus and Ukraine and the GOL's overall positive response -- particularly from the new Chairman of the Seimas Foreign Relations Committee - to develop a more active policy towards Belarus is worth noting, and could signal increased Lithuanian efforts to bring about a higher degree of activism on the EU-level.

CODEL Hastings has not cleared on this cable.
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